

Creative Ways to Teach Missions to Children

These ideas were collected from diverse sources and from leaders who are intentionally and purposefully helping children to understand the Great Commission and the part that they can play in sharing the gospel.

1. Use multicultural puppets or dolls.

Use multicultural puppets or provide dolls of other races and cultures for children's play in the younger classes. Discuss the places these dolls represent and talk about how the people need to learn about Jesus.

2. Take an imaginary missions trip.

- For nursery age it might be as simple as walking across a blue rug to represent the ocean, then climbing over a hurdle (playground equipment or a pile of blankets) to represent a mountain range, tip-toeing quietly past the "wild animals" (stuffed animals), and then singing Jesus Loves Me to the people who have never heard about Jesus before (dolls).
- For fours and fives you can set up chairs to represent an airplane and "fly" to Africa to build a church (with building blocks) for the people to learn about God.
- For older children provide passports and experience what it is like to go through customs, then "fly" to another country. When they "arrive", they can try some foods they have never had before, then sit on the floor (or on logs or something appropriate for the country) and learn about the culture, the people and their spiritual needs from a missionary in costume.

3. Memorize scripture on the topic of missions.

4. Regularly expose the children to things international.

- Make crafts from other countries. (For example, have someone teach the children to do origami.)
- Listen to music or play games that are popular in another country.
- Learn how to use chopsticks.
- Follow current events in other parts of the world, and post clippings on the bulletin board. Show videos of other countries.
- Start an international stamp collection as a class, or start a stamp club.
- Serve international foods for snacks.
- Look for simple international recipes on the web, and allow the children to help with cooking or preparation.
- Learn some international greetings.
- Display international posters (available from travel agencies) or pictures of children from around the world.

5. Use drama.

Tell a simple missionary story and help the children to act it out.

6. Write letters to missionaries, missionary children, or pen pals. Have the children write letters to a missionary, a missionary child, or pen pals recommended by your missionary. Ask the missionary to write a short note, send a specific prayer request or a small memento that can be posted as a prayer reminder in the room where the children meet.

7. Encourage outreach in your own community.

- Encourage children to invite their friends to Sunday School or Awana.
- Teach them how to share the gospel with their friends.
- Have a food drive for those less fortunate. Collect school supplies, toiletries or buckets for children who cannot afford them. (This year one teacher encouraged the four-year-olds to bring money; then she watched for new children's clothing on clearance. She purchased \$2,085.75 worth of new clothing for \$437.04! Along with several parents of the students, she and her class took the clothing to a women and children's shelter where each needy mother was given the opportunity to choose a minimum of two new outfits for each of her children.)

8. Prepare for the arrival of missionaries in your church. When a missionary is coming to speak in your church, prepare the children in advance. Do some research, or have the children help to learn about missionary works. Have them prepare a list of questions to ask the missionary or missionary children when they come. Invite the missionary to visit your group or class during his visit in the area. Assign children to interview the missionary.

9. Play games that teach about missions. Play matching games (matching missionaries to the countries where they work), geography and map games. See who can find specific country on the globe or map.

10. Read missionary stories. Read one chapter every week from a missionary story. Plan a summer reading contest to encourage children to read missionary biographies or stories of famous Christians.

11. Teach missions in summer children's ministries. Plan Vacation Bible School around a missions theme or project, or do a missions quarter during the summer Sunday School. Give your regular summer off and plan a missions program for the children. Use a good curriculum and invite missionaries from the area to visit.

12. Get to know national believers. Invite national believers to share with the class about their country and how they learned about Jesus. Ask them to wear their national dress and perhaps teach a game, song or craft from their country.

13. Plan a missionary camp-out. Plan a missionary camp-out during the summer. Especially if you have missionaries that work among tribal people, plan a special event where children can go and experience the life of a missionary for one night. Cook over a fire and learn what it's like to live in another country without electricity and running water. (There are missionaries who still serve in fairly remote settings in Africa and Asia. Remember, however, that most missionaries today serve in more modern cities of the world, where populations are concentrated. Help the children learn which missionaries serve in which kinds of places.) Invite families to join you.

14. Plan visits from Mr. Missionary or Mama Missionary

Appoint someone from your missions committee (or another gifted person) to become Mr. Missionary or Mama Missionary to your children's program. Once a week or once a month this person can go to each Sunday School class or to children's church with a "Missions Toolbox", taking five or ten minutes to talk about missions and to pray for different needs. Place various items in the toolbox, each representing a prayer need, which children can hold as a visual reminder, as they offer a short prayer. Items in the toolbox could include items such as the following:

- a. photo of any missionaries from your church
- b. Bible to remember to pray for Bible translation
- c. Sunday School paper to remind children to p
- d. a passport as a reminder to pray for government
- e. a toy plane, jeep or car, praying for safe transportation
- f. a bottle of water, praying for safe water for missionaries and o
- g. a band-aid, praying for medical missions and for the heal
- h. a piece of money, praying for finances needed for missionaries
- i. dictionary, praying for translation work to make God's Word available in languages.

15. Use missionary trading cards.

Make use of missionary trading cards as rewards in Sunday School. Each card can picture a missionary or missionary family and give facts about them and the country where they serve. Children can get prizes for collecting a complete set of cards or knowing answers to questions about the missionaries.

16. Send short-term teams that include children.

17. Pray faithfully for missions.

Encourage the children to pray for missions. Set an example by praying for missionaries or mission projects at every meeting or class time.